

**Human Rights Commission
October 5, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Scott Dean, Jessica Macy, Thomas O'Toole, Negar Rezvani, Justin Routt, Mark Thomas, Marissa Todd

Members Excused:

Staff Present: Fred Boeckmann, Marie Glaze, Steve Hollis, Kari Utterback

Others Present: Bruce Alspaugh, Allyson Brown, Bridget Kapp, Teresa Klassen, Zach Murdoch, Audrey Raymond, Julie Wisniewski

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Thomas. Routt was introduced and welcomed.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Macy moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Dean and passed unanimously.
- III. **Approval of September 7, 2010 meeting minutes:** Todd made a motion to approve the September 7, 2010 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Dean and passed unanimously.
- IV. **Old Business:** Thomas asked about the commission's recommendation that a residency requirement be added for the Human Rights Commission. Boeckmann said that there was a first reading of the revised ordinance and the second reading and adoption will take place at the October 18 council meeting.
- V. **New Business:**

a. Discussion Regarding Commission Support of the James Scott Monument:

Glaze started the discussion by letting the commission know that James Scott was the last person lynched in Columbia. James T. Scott was a black man lynched in 1923. Scott was accused of raping a white girl, Regina Almstedt. While awaiting trial in the Boone County Jail a mob of 1,000 people broke him out and hung him from a bridge on Stewart Road. He is buried in Columbia Cemetery in a grave that still bears only a temporary marker. On September 13th Dr. Clyde Ruffin convened a meeting to gather interest in creating a monument at the James Scott gravesite. An Ad Hoc committee was formed of those present. There will be a program and reception at 6 pm on November 7th at Second Baptist Church to share with the community the efforts to raise money for the monument. This will allow involvement by everyone in the community to help bring closure to this chapter in our history. Glaze asked if the commission would be interested in sponsoring the event on November 7th. Hollis stated that he is in touch with the State Historical Society, which plans to do an oral history on the incident, about applying for HREP funds. Glaze also stated there are some individuals who are working to get his death certificate amended. The death certificate now reads "rape" as the second cause of death. They would like a line through the word rape on the official death certificate. Glaze also listed all the other sponsors of the project: Second Missionary Baptist Church, City of Columbia Office of the Mayor, The Family of Regina Almstedt, City of Columbia Division of Human Services, Columbia Cemetery Association, Columbia Special Business District, Columbia Daily Tribune, The Missouri School of Journalism, University of Missouri Black Law Students Association, The State Historical Society of Missouri, Boone County Historical Society, Human Rights Task Force, Missouri Association for Social Welfare, State of Missouri NAACP, Disabled American Veterans, Gaines Oldham Black Culture Center, H.T. May and Sons Funeral Home, Minority Mens Network and Missouri Commission on Human Rights. Negar made a motion that the Human Rights Commission become a sponsor for the project to erect a monument at the burial site of James T. Scott and of the event on November 7th and to make the community aware of

the money raising efforts to do so. Routt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Hollis encouraged the commissioners to go to the November 7th event and if there is time perhaps a commissioner could speak at the event.

b. Discussion Regarding Missouri Non-Discrimination Act: Bruce Alspaugh stated that there is not a current state law safeguarding LGBT individuals from discrimination. He said that the Missouri Non-Discrimination Act legislation would add sexual orientation to the other protected classes (i.e. race, religion, age, etc). Last year it got a committee hearing, but never got to the floor. He said he got word that Missouri State Senator Kurt Schaefer might be interested in helping to sponsor this proposal. He wrote a letter to Senator Schaefer (that was passed out to the commission) and followed up with him. The Senator let Alspaugh know that he was going to have his Chief-of-Staff look into it for the next session. Alspaugh said that he would like to get a letter campaign started to the Senator and let him know that his constituents want this to be a state law. He asked the commission if they would write a letter discussing the city ordinance that has been in place for years and how the commission has dealt with these types of discrimination cases. Hollis let the commission know that this is still a long way from becoming a state law, but last year it did get further than ever before. Boeckmann said the commission would have to vote to have the chair draft a letter from the commission, but that each commissioner could write a letter individually as well. Thomas made a motion that the commission chair draft a letter to Kurt Schaefer in support of the Missouri Non-Discrimination Act. Routt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Macy asked that the letter be forwarded to the commission members after being drafted.

VI. Staff Reports:

Manager of Human Services: Hollis stated that the Columbia Police Department (CPD) and the City Channel had worked together to produce the small video clip, "Traffic Stop Do's and Don'ts". This video helps individuals know what to do when they are pulled over. Hollis asked if the commission would be interested in having a CPD representative make a presentation to the commission about the video and unconscious bias. The commission agreed to have staff invite a CPD representative to the November commission meeting. The video clip had been sent to the commission, but Hollis said that he would resend. The commission agreed to view the video before the next commission meeting, so there would be plenty of discussion.

Hollis said he will be doing some publicity about the revised HREP funding process. Hollis went on to say that his office is getting ready to be immersed in the planning of the Diversity Celebration. He reported that Justice Ginsberg sent a hand-written letter to Marie declining her invitation this year, so there will be an artistic program again this year. He reminded the commission that they are a sponsor and each commissioner receives a ticket to the event.

a. Law Department: No report.

b. Human Rights Specialist: Glaze submitted the following written report:

On September 7th Staff accepted an invitation to join the Columbia Muslim Community at Iftar dinner. This is the evening meal during the Ramadan fast. Apparently, this has been done in the past. In addition to staff there were other members from the Christian faith committee in attendance. Otto Steinhaus, Maureen Dickmann, & David Finke to name a few. As a guest staff was allowed to share the meal in the dining area with the males. Prayer however was done in the company of the females. It was a great learning experience and staff was happy to be in attendance.

Staff met with Steve Maloney & Delinda Davis on September 9th. Steve is the Regional Manager for the stores here in Columbia and 8 others. Delinda is the Market HR Manager for Market 4. They love the Diversity Celebration and remain committed to it. They are very much interested in being involved in community diversity for themselves and their staff.

Staff told them about our community outreach pilot program and of course there was interest in that as well as the slide presentation put together for the Office of Neighborhood Services. They were told that staff would be happy to share it, but that we would not be doing any training. He understood and was okay with it.

It was good and productive meeting and staff is looking forward to working with them.

Staff was invited to the Monthly Disability Commission meeting to discuss the City's Human Rights Ordinance. Staff shared with the commission a brief history of the ordinance and how persons with disabilities are protected. The commission was informed that we accept complaints of discrimination and investigate the complaints, but our primary emphasis is on education. It was interesting to note that it appeared that a number of the commission members was unaware that Columbia had a stand alone Human Rights Ordinance. Staff remained for the entire meeting as there were accessibility issues on the agenda with the Dining Train issue being of particular concern to the commission. Tony St. Romaine shared a Public Accessibility Survey City of Columbia Facilities. Tony in addition to being an Assistant City Manager is also the ADA Coordinator for the City of Columbia. Lorah Steiner, Executive Director of Convention and Visitors Bureau was also there and addressed the concerns of the Dining Train and the accessibility to it. Basically, the contracting company has two years to get a car in ADA compliance.

Staff attended an early morning staff meeting with Neighborhood Services to help address concerns about being more culturally sensitive and how to respond to those who feel they are being discriminated against. Staff put together a slide presentation based on various information assembled on Cultural Competence. Staff received the following e-mail feedback from Leigh Britt:

Marie --

The thanks goes to YOU for coming in on your day off and for sharing your message with us. I think it was a relief to hear you say that we needed to continue our enforcement duties even when we don't get a warm reception. Thanks for sharing your time with us!

VII. Commission Reports

Citizens Police Review Board: Dean reported that the Citizen Police Review Board is working on finalizing a Spanish version of their brochure and is also trying to simplify the complaint process online. He said at the next meeting they are going to hear from Citizens for a Taser-Free Columbia and he invited any commissioner interested to attend that meeting. Boeckmann stated that the City Council had amended who could file a complaint and it is now anyone who was involved in the situation or their family or any witness.

VIII. Public Comment: No Public Comment.

IX. Commissioner Comments: Macy stated that Sheila Ruffin is trying to put together a planning committee to renovate the historic Annie Fisher Home. Annie Fisher was a black woman who started a catering business in the 1920's. The Smarr family now owns the property and a few years ago was considering tearing the property down. Macy reported that Sheila's dream would be to turn the house into a place where women can be empowered.

- X. Closed Session to Discuss Pending Cases Pursuant to Section 610.021 (1)RSMo.:**
Rezvani made a motion to move to closed session to discuss pending cases pursuant to Section 610.021 (1) RSMo. The motion was seconded by O'Toole and a roll call vote was taken. Rezvani called the roll with the following vote: Dean – Aye, O'Toole – Aye, Thomas – Aye, Macy – Aye, Rezvani – Aye, Routt – Aye, Todd - Aye

- XI. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve Hollis,

Manager of Human Services